

REMARKS

I. Status of the Application

At the time of the Action, Claims 1-9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18-28, 30, 32, 33, 35-37 and 41-50 were pending. Claims 1-9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18-22, 33, 35-37 and 46-49 are allowed. Claims 25-28 are objected to, but are deemed to recite allowable subject matter. Claims 23, 24, 30, 32 and 50 stand rejected under Section 102(b).

Claim 23 has been amended above to incorporate the subject matter of canceled Claim 25. As a result, Claim 23 and Claims 24, 30 and 32 (all of which depend from Claim 23) should be allowable.

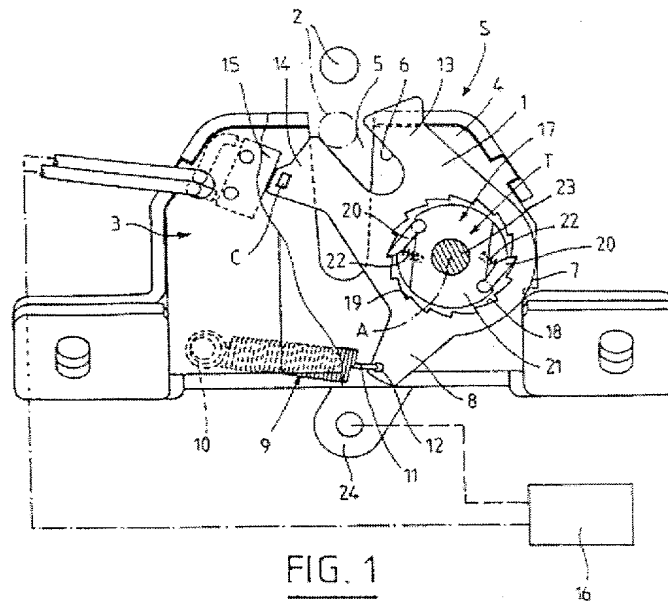
Claim 50 has also been amended above. Applicant submits that, as amended, Claim 50 is now patentable; the reasons that Claim 50 overcomes the rejection under Section 102(b) are set forth below.

II. The Rejection of Claim 50

The Action rejects Claim 50 under Section 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,927,196 to Girard et al. (Girard). The Action states that Girard discloses a rotary unit for use in a locking system that has:

- (a) a base plate 3 having a slot 5;
- (b) a rotary member 1 rotatably mounted with the base plate about a first axis of rotation and having a plurality of fingers 13, 14, and an engagement portion 18, 19 fixed to the central portion and having a plurality of teeth;
- (c) a pawl member 20 pivotally connected with the base plate about a second axis of rotation that has an engagement projection that selectively engages the engagement portion of the rotary member; and
- (d) a biasing member 22 that biases the pawl member to engage the engagement portion of the rotary member.

Figure 1 from Girard is reproduced below.



Based on the characterizations set forth above, the Action concludes that Claim 50 is anticipated by Girard.

In response, Applicants note that the bolt 1 of Girard is not able to rotate freely about the axis A in either rotative direction. Instead, it can be seen that the interaction between the pawls 20 and the notches 19 prevents any rotation of the bolt 1 in a counterclockwise direction (from the vantage point of Figure 1 of Girard), and the presence of both the spring 9 and the upper wall of the base 3 prevents the bolt 1 from rotating freely (i.e., 360° rotation) in a counterclockwise direction. As such, the Girard lock does not meet the recitation in Claim 50 that the engagement portion of the pawl member "permit free rotation of the rotary member in a second rotative direction that is opposite the first rotative direction." Accordingly, Applicants submit that Girard fails to anticipate the subject matter of Claim 50, and respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.


Moreover, Applicants submit that the lock of Girard does not suggest the subject matter of Claim 50. Because the Girard lock has only two branches 13, 14 that define one "cut" 5, it is

clear that the Girard lock would not benefit from free rotation in one rotative direction. In fact, if the Girard lock rotated freely through 360°, in most positions the cut 5 would not be oriented to receive the keeper 2, thereby rendering the lock inoperative. Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in this art would not have been motivated to modify the Girard lock to rotate freely in one rotative direction because doing so would produce a lock that would be inoperative in many positions. Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 50 defines over the art of record and, as such, satisfies the provisions of Section 103(a).

III. Conclusion

Inasmuch as the points and concerns raised in the Official Action have been addressed in full, Applicant respectfully requests that this application is in condition to pass to issue, which action is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any matters of outstanding resolution, he is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at 919-854-1400 for expeditious handling.

Respectfully submitted,

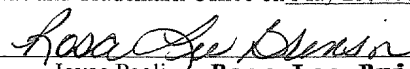


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CERTIFICATION OF TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted via the Office electronic filing system in accordance with § 1.6(a)(4) to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on May 23, 2007.

Signature: 
~~Joyce Paoli~~ **Rosa Lee Brinson**